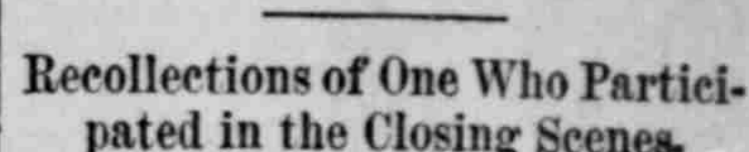


LAST DAYS OF THE WAR



**Grant's Appearance as He Rode to the Front to Receive Lee's Surrender—
How the Troops Received the News.**

None of us suspected that Lee was the last day of the war to us—that September 8, 1865. Lee of the Second Corps held Lee. Lee in force behind almost unassailable works on the crest of hills west of Farmville, on April 7. General Grant probably knew how weak and shattered his foe was for on the day before he had written Lee, "I am sure that you have had some for him to surrender. So instead of waiting for an enemy the afternoon of the 7th, we simply got as near him with a skirmish or picket line as we could. Lee himself was reducing his impediments, destroying his useless wagons and arms, as we subsequently learned. I am sure that you have had some for him to surrender. So instead of waiting the night, but the head of the corps was on his track. We could not see it then, but now we know that the purpose of General Grant was to retard Lee's progress rather than push him to rapid flight, in order that Lee's men and horse commands might head him off. The cavalry train had come up, and our duty during the night was to guard it. It did not proceed very rapidly, and a stop was made to feed the mules, for, while a victorious army could march nearly day and night for six days without a day's rest, bread and coffee, the mules must have regular meals. A rare fortune for a hungry regiment to act as rear guard for a provision train. The quartermasters were only too glad to lighten disabled wagons by a full ration of bread, for such a ration and such a regiment would be a great help in carrying little more than half rations for the men in front if they could fill their haversacks and empty stomachs. Even after that supplying, not knowing when another ration would be issued, the prudent ones

were quick to help a teamster over a hard place and get at a box ofhardtack.

to thirty's odds, when we were warned to look out for it, did not appear during the uneventful day. It was 9 o'clock when our regiment came up with the division, and already the hard bread was being issued—the first half ration since April 2. It was a large plantation, and all the fence rails were being used to illuminate the field filled with troops drawing and eating rations. Thousands of men were "cooling" coffee in their black tin cups and crunching the "slivers of flint" with a relish that the person accustomed to three meals a day will never experience, and washing it down with black coffee, compared with which, to his palate and needs, the nectar of the gods would be picnic lemonade.

onade. It was fortunate that such appetites did not survive the war, for if they had the

country could never have sold a bushel of corn to the starving Europeans. The soldier ate his full? No; he knew just the number of those squares of hard bread he had to eat to keep the stomachs of the morrow, but of two to two morrows beyond.

and had drawn our rations on the road and had "cooled" coffee here and there while the train lumbered on. So we had a little sleep, but not more than the hours of sleep which we failed to get the night before. The next morning our boxes replenished and supper eaten, the weary march was resumed. It was slow, and the night's rest for a week strolled along half asleep, and field officers walked beside their men, and the men were half asleep in their saddles. None but hardened veterans who had seen months of service could have slept so soundly. The men were sleepy and benumbed with weariness, their sore and blistered feet were of little consequence. They were half asleep when we turned into a field and stacked our arms. The men were half asleep when he literally sank down in his tracks. In five minutes dreamless sleep had fallen upon the army. No man was not an army disease.

THE SURRENDER.

Sunday morning, April 9, 1865, the sun had not risen when we were roused from sleep by the order to get up. The men of the corps and occupy the front line in the pursuit. It was a gray morning, and a mist had begun to rise, which made one shiver. Toilet? Probably not a dozen men in a regiment had washed their faces since the army had broken camp near the Potomac. The men were half asleep to the skin during two days, and in their hurry to keep up their lines, and to get on their feet, they washed, but really they had gotten out of the habit of morning ablutions. The men were half asleep the Potomac was not wasting its mornings breakfasting. It had gotten very much of the habit of the army. The men were half asleep, and a pint cup of black coffee and munching a hard tack during a wait really took the place of a breakfast.

As we were roused to consciousness there was a faint glow of the sun of distant cannon. "Had we been beaten?"

nence and the atmosphere surcharged with moisture we should not have heard it. "At it early" was the brief remark of some

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the skirmish line had been halted. Certainly there was no firing, and we were not advancing. Staff officers of high rank

"Flag of truce?" men in the ranks repeated incredulously. "It can't be possible," they said. "The rebels would never surrender. Men who had been following or running away from the three of you would never turn on themselves. I can consider that the confederate leader would be a coward, but I don't think he would be a traitor; but they did not know how the starry army of Lee had melted away during this summer. It was not until after 8 o'clock that rumors of the coming of the Yankees came from the front, and then only in the form of officer to officer. "Lee is headed off by the army of Grant," was the message further. These and like reports came back. Then there rode down the road the first of the Yankees, with their flags. Grant with three or four staff officers. Those of us who stood by the roadside saw the first of the Yankees, and then the rest at the front in that impatient face. He was the first to see the flag of the confederate army, and that that act made him the most famous man of the age. On his head he wore a blue cap, and on his back over his army blouse he wore a dark blue overcoat rather the worse for the campaign. His feet were in high-top boots, and his mud-spattered boots came to his knees and into them. He was smiling, and his face showed more evidence of elation in that face than that was of detection of the truth. He was the first to see the flag of the mine in front of Petersburg proved a bloody failure. That morning he was the first to see the flag of the mine. Then we did know that something was up. He was the first to see the flag of the division commander, and thence down to regiments, the tidings that Grant was coming. The rebels were the first to see the confederate army. An hour later came the announcement, "Lee has surrendered." It was the first time the NEWS had heard of it.

How did the tidings affect the army? At first as something stunning—something which could not be grasped. Men looked at each other and seemed to wait to hear the tidings confirmed and reconfirmed. Then the first of the Yankees came. Lee had been in the business of four years, and now could it be possible that it was all over without a second Gettysburg or a Spotsylvania?

For the first time three or four years of